

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Claim 1 (currently amended) A method of manufacturing a bituminous coated aggregate mix comprising aggregate coated with bitumen, said aggregate itself comprising fine ~~partioles~~ aggregate and ~~chippings~~ coarse aggregate lying in the range 4mm to 20 mm, said method comprising at least the following steps:

(a) drying a first portion of the aggregate that has substantially no fines by heating to a temperature which is not less than 100°C,

(b) an intermediate mix is formed by coating said first portion of the aggregate with hot bitumen; and

(c) mixing a second portion of the aggregate that comprises sand and fines that is wet and unheated with the intermediate mix obtained at step (b), thereby obtaining said bituminous coated aggregate mix at a temperature lying in the range 60°C to 100°C, and whereby at least part of the water contained in the second portion of the aggregate is vaporized during said step (c) and causes the bitumen to expand.

Claim 2 (canceled)

Claim 3 (original) A method according to claim 1, in which, during step (c), the second portion of the aggregate, which is mixed with the intermediate mix, is constituted by aggregate at ambient temperature.

Claim 4 (currently amended) A method according to claim 1, ~~in which the first portion of the aggregate comprises chippings lying in the range 4 mm to 20 mm, whereas~~ wherein the second portion of the aggregate comprises sand and fines only.

Claim 5 (original) A method according to claim 1, in which the first portion of the aggregate further comprises sand having a particle size greater than 2 mm.

Claim 6 (original) A method according to claim 1, in which the second portion of the aggregate represents in the range 15% by weight of the aggregate to 75% by weight of the aggregate.

Claim 7 (original) A method according to claim 1, in which the second portion of the aggregate has a water content lying in the range 2% by weight to 5% by weight, and preferably about 3.5% by weight, before it is mixed with said intermediate mix.

Claim 8 (original) A method according to claim 1, in which, during step (a), the first portion of the aggregate is heated to a temperature lying in the range 100°C to 160°C, and preferably in the range 110°C to 130°C, and said temperature is such that, after step (c), the coated aggregate mix is at a temperature lying in the range 60°C to 100°C.

Claim 9 (original) A method according to claim 8, in which, during step (c), a quantity of water is added to the mix, which quantity of water is sufficient for said water to vaporize in part, and to cause the bitumen to expand.

Claim 10 (original) A method according to claim 1, in which, during step (c), a quantity of water is added to the mix, which quantity of water is sufficient for water to remain in the bituminous coated aggregate mix after step (c).

Claim 11 (cancelled)

Claim 12 (original) A method according to claim 1, in which all of the bitumen that enters into the composition of the bituminous coated aggregate mix is added to the mix during step (b).

Claim 13 (currently amended) A method of manufacturing a bituminous coated aggregate mix comprising aggregate coated with bitumen, said aggregate itself comprising ~~fine particles~~ aggregate and ~~chippings~~ coarse aggregate lying in the range 4mm to 20 mm, said method comprising at least the following steps:

drying a first portion of the aggregate that has substantially no fines by heating to a temperature which is not less than 100°C,

mixing the first portion with a second portion of the aggregate and with hot bitumen, the second portion of the aggregate comprising sand and fines and being wet and unheated, thereby obtaining said bituminous coated aggregate mix at a temperature lying in the range 60°C to 100°C, and whereby at least part of the water contained in the second portion of the aggregate is vaporized during said mixing and causes the bitumen to expand.

Claim 14 (previously presented) A method according to claim 13, in which the second portion of the aggregate is constituted by aggregate at ambient temperature.

Claim 15 (currently amended) A method according to claim 13, [in which the first portion of the aggregate comprises chippings lying in the range 4 mm to 20 mm, whereas] wherein the second portion of the aggregate comprises sand and fines only.

Claim 16 (previously presented) A method according to claim 13, in which the first portion of the aggregate further comprises sand having a particle size greater than 2 mm.

Claim 17 (previously presented) A method according to claim 13, in which the second portion of the aggregate represents in the range 15% by weight of the aggregate to 75% by weight of the aggregate.

Claim 18 (previously presented) A method according to claim 13, in which the second portion of the aggregate has a water content lying in the range 2% by weight to 5% by weight, and preferably about 3.5% by weight, before it is mixed with said first portion of the aggregate and said hot bitumen.

Claim 19 (previously presented) A method according to claim 13, in which the first portion of the aggregate is heated to a temperature lying in the range 100°C to 160°C, and preferably in the range 110°C to 130°C, and said temperature is such that, after mixing the first and second portions of the aggregate with the hot bitumen, the coated aggregate mix is at a temperature lying in the range 60°C to 100°C.

Claim 20 (previously presented) A method according to claim 19, in which, a quantity of water is added during mixing the first and second portions of the aggregate with the hot bitumen, which quantity of water is sufficient for said water to vaporize in part, and to cause the bitumen to expand.

Claim 21 (previously presented) A method according to claim 13, in which a quantity of water is added during mixing the first and second portions of the aggregate with the hot bitumen, which quantity of water is sufficient for water to remain in the bituminous coated aggregate mix after mixing.

Claims 22-25 (cancelled)

Claim 26 (new) A method of manufacturing a bituminous coated aggregate mix comprising aggregate coated with bitumen, said aggregate itself comprising fine aggregate and coarse aggregate lying in the range 4mm to 20 mm, said method comprising at least the following steps:

(a) drying a first portion of the aggregate that has substantially no fines by heating to a temperature which is in the range 180°C to 220 °C and preferably about 200 °C,

(b) an intermediate mix is formed by coating said first portion of the aggregate with hot bitumen; and

(c) mixing a second portion of the aggregate that comprises sand and fines that is wet and unheated with the intermediate mix obtained at step (b), thereby obtaining said bituminous coated aggregate mix at a temperature lying in the range 100°C to 150°C, and preferably about 130°C.

Claim 27 (new) A method of manufacturing a bituminous coated aggregate mix comprising aggregate coated with bitumen, said aggregate itself comprising fine aggregate and coarse aggregate lying in the range 4mm to 20 mm, said method comprising at least the following steps:

drying a first portion of the aggregate that has substantially no fines by heating to a temperature which is in the range 180°C to 220 °C and preferably about 200 °C,

mixing the first portion with a second portion of the aggregate and with hot bitumen, the second portion of the aggregate comprising sand and fines and being wet and unheated, thereby obtaining said bituminous coated aggregate mix at a temperature lying in the range 100°C to 150°C, and preferably about 130°C.

Claim 28 (new) A method according to claim 1, wherein water remains in the bituminous coated aggregate mix after step (c).

Claim 29 (new) A method according to claim 13, wherein water remains in the bituminous coated aggregate mix after step (c).

Claim 30 (new) A method of manufacturing a bituminous coated aggregate mix comprising aggregate coated with bitumen, said aggregate itself comprising fine aggregate and coarse aggregate lying in the range 4mm to 20 mm, said method comprising at least the following steps:

(a) drying a first portion of the aggregate including coarse aggregate by heating to a temperature which is not less than 100°C,

(b) an intermediate mix is formed by coating said first portion of the aggregate with hot bitumen; and

(c) mixing a second portion of the aggregate that comprises sand and fines that is wet and unheated with the intermediate mix obtained at step (b), thereby obtaining said bituminous coated aggregate mix at a temperature lying in the range 60°C to 100°C, and whereby at least part of the water contained in the second portion of the aggregate is vaporized during said step (c) and causes the bitumen to expand.

Claim 31 (new) A method of manufacturing a bituminous coated aggregate mix comprising aggregate coated with bitumen, said aggregate itself comprising fine aggregate and coarse aggregate lying in the range 4mm to 20 mm, said method comprising at least the following steps:

drying a first portion of the aggregate including coarse aggregate by heating to a temperature which is not less than 100°C,

mixing the first portion with a second portion of the aggregate and with hot bitumen, the second portion of the aggregate comprising sand and fines and being wet and unheated, thereby obtaining said bituminous coated aggregate mix at a temperature lying in the range 60°C to 100°C, and whereby at least part of the water contained in the second portion of the aggregate is vaporized during said mixing and causes the bitumen to expand.